COUNTY WATER DISTRICT OF BILLINGS HEIGHTS

Emergency Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 10, 2026

Board Room, County Water District of Billings Heights, 1540 Popelka Dr.

The Emergency meeting was held at the Law offices of Felt Martin Frazier & Weldon. The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Martin Smith. President Essmann called the meeting to order and asked the Board Secretary to call the roll. Directors Ellis, Erpenbach, Ewalt, Graves, Kary and President Essmann were present and a quorum was established. Also in attendance were General Manager Oborn, Board Secretary Bakker, and Martin Smith. Zach Welton and MR joined via Zoom Link. President Essmann read the President's Remarks on Conduct of Meeting and asked if any members of the public wished to make a comment. No comments were offered.

Agenda

Director Graves moved to approve the agenda, Director Ewalt seconded, and the agenda passed unanimously.

Old Business

Update from Meter Committee on RFP Process

Director Ewalt reported that Request for Proposal (RFP) had been sent out and published in the Yellowstone County News. They received responses from Neptune, Nexus and Kamstrup. The committee responded to the questions posed by the responding companies. Director Ellis asked if the RFP had been published on the State RFP site? President Essmann asked that Director Ellis forward the link for the site to the GM.

Director Ellis asked if the Operations Manager position had been posted on the American Water Works Association (AWWA) site. As membership is required to be able to post positions, it was requested that GM Oborn inquire about transferring an existing membership of a former employee be transferred to the GM.

Update from GM on Plan for responding to customer service issues

GM Oborn gave a report to the Board regarding some customer service issues with the prompt response to service requests. There have been delays in responding to inquiries and a temporary employee has been hired to assist the Water clerk and improve response times. Additionally, customers will leave messages on multiple voicemails and response times are delayed when staff try to see if anyone has responded. President Essmann requested that a single voicemail be used for customer service requests to streamline the process and create a system for accountability.

1. **New Business**

Consideration of Contract to Provide Security to District Facilities

GM Oborn reported that the Lock Doctor had sent a proposal that offered two options for securing the District offices and the doors at the storage tanks and pump stations.

Option 1: All building door locks (8) to be restricted keys $3290.00
Option 2: All building door locks (8) to be Electronic access. All padlocks to be restricted keys $9790.00

Director Ewalt asked if the proposals cover all the District's properties. Director Kary made a motion to approve Option 1 for $3290. No second was offered. Director Ellis stated that she would vote no on that option as it didn't have the ability to track access to those sites and to turn off access when needed. Director Erpenbach commented that card access or phone app access prevent unauthorized access to the facilities.

President Essmann made a substitute motion to approve Option 2 that includes electronic access. Director Erpenbach seconded the motion. During the public comment period, Zach Welton expressed his agreement with the electronic access option.

Director Ewalt asked where the electronic keypads would be installed. GM Oborn replied that they would be installed on any physical door. Director Kary commented if the locations would have cameras installed and if that was the case the electronic keys would be needed. GM Oborn replied that cameras were not planned for those areas due to the lack of internet service at the remote sites.

President Essmann told the group that he would be voting for the electronic access. Director Ewalt offered a friendly amendment to the substitute motion so that if electronic locks were installed, cameras would not be installed. Director Kary seconded the motion, and the amendment was accepted by President Essmann. President Essmann requested a roll call vote. The motion passed 5 to 1, with Director Kary voting no.

President Essmann concluded the public access to the meeting, explaining that the portion of the meeting would be closed to the public under MCA 2-3-112 to deal with an emergency issue affecting the public health, welfare, or safety as well as involving a district decision that must be made to protect the interests of the district.

In addition, the meeting will be closed to the public because the chair has determined that the individual privacy rights of District employees, including information and reports about workplace conduct are involved, and such rights outweigh the merits of public disclosure. The closed session will be fact gathering only and all deliberations and decisions made based on the facts will be done in open session later.

Carolyn B. Bakker

Carolyn B. Bakker, Board Secretary